

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendments and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-12 are pending and have been amended to address cosmetic issues of form and not for substance. Claim 2 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is introduced.

In the outstanding Office Action, the specification was objected to; Claims 5-12 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c); Claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ridley et al. (EP 0887638, hereafter Ridley) in view of Bucher et al. (U.S. 5,724,437, hereafter Bucher); and Claims 2 and 3 were objected to for depending from a rejected base claim but were otherwise indicated as allowable.

The indication of allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged. In response, and to expedite the issuance of a patent from the instant application, Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of allowable Claim 2 and allowable Claim 2 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, amended Claim 1, together with any claims depending therefrom, is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Further, the specification is amended to address the informalities identified in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

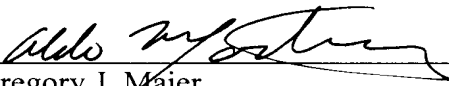
Claims 5-12 are also amended to address the informalities identified in the outstanding Office Action. As such, the objection is rendered moot.

For the reasons discussed above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance for Claims 1 and 3-12 is earnestly solicited.

Should, however, the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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